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National Security Decisions To Be Focus of Broad Inquiry

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WASHINGTON, June 21 — John Tower, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, announced a sweeping inquiry today into the way the Defense Department, White House, other executive agencies and Congress make decisions affecting national security.

Mr. Tower's announcement of hearings, scheduled to begin July 26, came against a backdrop of increased concern about rapidly rising military costs, allegations of a cumbersome bureaucracy and questions about whether command of the armed forces would be effective in wartime.

In a related development today, the Defense Department said that the Navy had only enough air-to-air missiles and some other advanced weapons for five aircraft carriers at any one time.

The Pentagon's chief spokesman, Henry E. Catto Jr., said at a news briefing that even though there had been heavy spending on ammunition in recent years, American warships coming off station overseas must still transfer some weapons to ships going on station.

But other officials pointed out that stocks of war reserves had been increased in recent years and a spokesman for the Navy said no carrier would be forced to go to sea without ammunition in wartime.

The Navy usually has four carriers deployed at forward stations at any one time, one each in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. Two more are training off each coast while four are in port. Another carrier is usually undergoing overhaul.

In another development, the director of the Congressional Budget Office, Alice M. Rivlin, testified that the Army

"lacks the techniques to project comprehensive estimates of future operating and support costs for a modernized Army." Mrs. Rivlin repeated a warning that her office made before, that an influx of advanced new weapons would result in a substantial rise in operating costs.

In announcing plans for the inquiry on national security, Mr. Tower, a Texas Republican, cited recent criticisms of the military establishment by former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown; Gen. David C. Jones of the Air Force, retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. Edward C. Meyer, the retiring Army Chief of Staff, all of whom he said would be asked to testify.

Mr. Tower said the first witness at his committee's hearings would be Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, and several of his predecessors would be invited to testify. He said former members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and civilian defense specialists would also be witnesses.

Mr. Tower said the panel would examine the relationship between the Defense Department and the National Security Council, State Department and Central Intelligence Agency to see whether they were "appropriate and effective."

In response to a question, he said, "I think one has to assume that Congress is part of the problem." He asserted that "we in Congress often treat the symptom, not the disease" and said that Congress was guilty of transgressions, "not the least of which is pork-barreling."